

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 017772 TOSEC 010203

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT BONN 1275 ACTION SECSTATE 23 JANUARY 76.

QUOTE

S E C R E T BONN 01275

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: GW, PFOR

SUBJECT: LETTER TO THE SECRETARY FROM WILLY BRANDT

REF: BONN 1239

1. FOLLOWING IS OUR TRANSLATION OF LETTER FOR THE
SECRETARY HANDED TO THE AMBASSADOR TODAY BY SPD PARTY
CHAIRMAN BRANDT.

2. BEGIN TEXT:

DEAR MR. FOREIGN MINISTER:

I GREATLY APPRECIATE THE CONFIDENTIAL MESSAGE THAT YOU

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SENT ME ON JANUARY 14.

I HAVE, OF COURSE, ALWAYS REGARDED AS INACCURATE THE PRESS REPORTS WHICH YOU MENTIONED CONCERNING THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY. MORE IMPORTANT THAN THAT, HOWEVER, IS THE CONFIRMATION OF OUR COMMON EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE DETENTE, WHICH MY FRIENDS AND I HAVE NEVER MISTAKEN AS A WEAKENING OF OUR OPPOSITION TO COMMUNISM.

IN SO FAR AS OUR PART OF EUROPE IS CONCERNED, MY PARTY HAS NEVER SUPPORTED, AND DOES NOT NOW INTEND TO SUPPORT, AN ALLIANCE WITH THE COMMUNISTS. IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR POSSIBILITIES WE HAVE -- WITHIN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND OUTSIDE AS WELL -- ENCOURAGED THE FORCES OF THE NON-COMMUNIST LEFT. WE WILL CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN THEM.

IN DOING SO WE HAVE HAD TO DEAL WITH, AND WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE TO DEAL WITH, THE FACT THAT IN SOME COUNTRIES -- BECAUSE OF HISTORICAL AND PRESENT REASONS -- THERE ARE COMMUNIST PARTIES WHICH ARE SUPPORTED BY A LARGE SEGMENT OF THE WORKING CLASS AND WHICH ALSO RECEIVE ELECTORAL SUPPORT FROM SOME MIDDLE CLASS CIRCLES. THERE ARE REASONS FOR THIS, WHICH WE HAVE TO TAKE SERIOUSLY. THE DEVELOPMENTS IN COUNTRIES, WHICH UP UNTIL RECENTLY WERE GOVERNED BY AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES, ARE PARTICULARLY RELEVANT IN THIS CONTEXT. IN SOME COMMUNIST PARTIES -- ESPECIALLY THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY -- THERE IS UNDERWAY A PROCESS OF BREAKING AWAY FROM DOGMATISM WHICH HAS EARNED OUR ATTENTION. I CANNOT SAY HOW FAR THIS PROCESS WILL GO OR HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE. IT IS, HOWEVER, CERTAIN THAT THIS PROCESS REPRESENTS CONSIDERABLE PROBLEMS FOR THE CONCEPT OF A CENTRALIZED WORLD COMMUNISM.

FROM THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC POINT OF VIEW THERE IS CERTAINLY NO REASON TO RELAX OUR WATCHFULNESS REGARDING THE CHALLENGES POSED BY COMMUNISM. THE COMMON INTERESTS OF THE WEST REQUIRE THAT OUR SECURITY REQUIREMENTS NOT BE REDUCED -- AS YOU SO EMPHATICALLY

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INDICATED.

IT HAS BEEN PROVEN IN PORTUGAL THAT HOPELESS SITUATIONS ARE A RARITY. NOTHING NOW SURPASSES THE IMPORTANCE OF HELPING THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT TO CONTEND WITH THE VERY DIFFICULT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS FACING THAT COUNTRY.

IN SPAIN ANYTHING WHICH WILL WEAKEN THE CONSTRUCTION

OF SOLID DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES SHOULD BE AVOIDED. A GRADUAL PEACEFUL DEVELOPEMENT DEPENDS TO A LARGE EXTENT ON THOSE WHO HOLD THE RESPONSIBILITY OF GOVERNING AND IT WOULD BE GOOD TO ENCOURAGE THOSE AMONG THEM WHO ARE TRYING TO BRING ABOUT AN APPROPRIATE DEMOCRATIZATION. I CERTAINLY NEVER FAIL TO ADVISE MY FRIENDS FROM THE DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION TO ADOPT A REALISTIC AND RESPONSIBLE POSTURE.

THE DEVELOPMENTS IN ITALY DEPEND IN LARGE PART ON THE DECISION MAKING ABILITY OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND FROM THEIR RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION OF HOW THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE COMMUNIST PARTY WILL FURTHER DEVELOP. THE SOCIALISTS (AND PARTICULARLY THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS) HAVE A CONSIDERABLY SMALLER ROLE TO PLAY THAN DO THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. HOWEVER, THEY WILL GUARD AGAINST BEING FORCED INTO AN OPEN OR SECRET COALITION. IF I UNDERSTOOD IT CORRECTLY, THE SOCIALIST'S SUGGESTIONS FOR THE REVIVAL OF A GOVERNMENT OF THE "LEFT MIDDLE"

HAVE BEEN TURNED DOWN.

YOU CAN BE SURE THAT I AM GIVING MY CONTINUAL ATTENTION TO THE QUESTIONS YOU HAVE RAISED AND THAT I TAKE YOUR THOUGHTS INTO CONSIDERATION IN MY CONTACTS WITH OTHER LEADERS.

IN FOND MEMORY OF MANY YEARS OF COMMON EFFORTS AND WITH HEARTFELT GREETINGS,

YOUR

WILLY BRANDT END TEXT
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